

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 14

47TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2005

INTRODUCED BY

Ray Begaye

A JOINT MEMORIAL

URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR URBAN INDIAN HEALTH SERVICES IN ORDER TO AVERT A CRISIS FOR ALL NEW MEXICO TAXPAYERS.

WHEREAS, a shortfall of five million dollars (\$5,000,000) in the federal Indian health service budget has already resulted in a severe cutback in health care services to the approximately fifty thousand Native Americans living in New Mexico's urban centers; and

WHEREAS, of the nearly fifty thousand Native Americans residing in the Albuquerque metropolitan area, approximately seventy percent are uninsured; and

WHEREAS, requests for emergency appropriations from the United States congress have been deferred due to the high cost of supporting the war in Iraq; and

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1 WHEREAS, cutbacks in Indian health services will affect
2 other health care providers and facilities, as deserving
3 patients no longer being served by the Indian health service
4 will seek services elsewhere; and

5 WHEREAS, New Mexico's congressional representatives have
6 already written to urge the federal Indian health service to
7 provide stable and reliable funding for Indian health services,
8 particularly since inadequate funding may force closure of the
9 Albuquerque Indian health center, leaving an estimated
10 seventeen thousand Albuquerque residents without access to the
11 health care promised them in treaty and in law; and

12 WHEREAS, the country's obligation to fund services for
13 native peoples deprived of their lands and traditional ways is
14 founded in treaty, statute, constitution and ethics; and

15 WHEREAS, the health care needs of Native Americans persist
16 whether or not they reside on reservations where health care is
17 more reliable; and

18 WHEREAS, funding for urban Indian health services
19 comprises only one percent of the Indian health service budget,
20 although an estimated sixty percent of all Indians live away
21 from tribal land; and

22 WHEREAS, the Indian health service, prior to funding cuts,
23 spent an estimated one thousand nine hundred twenty dollars
24 (\$1,920) per patient, which is less than half of that paid for
25 veterans, for federal prisoners or for medicare recipients; and

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1 WHEREAS, Native American women are now reported, in the
2 *American Journal of Public Health*, to suffer the highest
3 percentage of mental disorders in the world; and

4 WHEREAS, the accident rate is seven times higher in the
5 Native American population than in other populations in the
6 United States; and

7 WHEREAS, both the diabetes and the tuberculosis rates of
8 Native Americans in Albuquerque rank fifth in the country, and
9 the alcoholism rate ranks second; and

10 WHEREAS, the suicide rate for Native Americans is almost
11 double that of other Americans, at just over twenty per one
12 hundred thousand population; and

13 WHEREAS, nearly one-quarter of Native Americans living in
14 Albuquerque live at or below the poverty level and over half
15 live in single-parent families;

16 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
17 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico congressional
18 delegation be requested to urge the United States congress to
19 adequately fund the Indian health service to ensure that the
20 urban Indian population of New Mexico is treated for accidents
21 and persistent health problems so that other state facilities
22 will not need to absorb the millions of dollars in treatment
23 expenses left unfunded; and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
25 transmitted to the governor, the secretary of health, the

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1 Navajo Nation, the all Indian pueblo council, the members of
2 New Mexico's congressional delegation, the federal secretary of
3 health and human services and the director of the federal
4 Indian health service.

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